



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

FILIPINO WOMAN SENTENCED TO 21 MONTHS IN PRISON

Cruise ship crewmember transferred more than \$255,000 to the Philippines illegally

ST. THOMAS, V.I.—U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced that a 44- year-old citizen of the Philippines was sentenced Thursday to serve 21 months in prison for operating an unlicensed money transmitting business with bank accounts in Alaska, Florida, St. Thomas and the Philippines.

On April 13, 2005, Chuchi Kue pleaded guilty to count one of a four-count indictment charging her with operating an unlicensed money transmitting business in violation of Title 18, United States Code (USC), Section 1960.

Kue's illegal business was first discovered on Dec. 9, 2004 during a routine cabin search on the Dawn Princess cruise ship. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspectors discovered approximately \$20,392 in cash, transaction ledgers, and several receipts from money remittance companies in Kue's cabin.

ICE agents in St. Thomas subsequently conducted a preliminary investigation and arrested Kue on Dec. 9, 2004 after she admitted receiving money from several crewmembers for remittance to the Philippines. Further investigation revealed that from Jan. 2004 to Nov. 2005, Kue transmitted more than \$255,000 to the Philippines illegally.

"There are laws that regulate the transmission of currencies in the United States and we, at ICE, will enforce those laws," said Lydia St. John-Mellado, acting special agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in Puerto Rico. "Neither the United States Virgin Islands nor Puerto Rico will be used as a safe haven for those who try to circumvent our immigration and customs laws. We will identify and arrest those who, in total disregard of the law, think that the U.S. territories are a back door for illegal activity."

Kue is in the custody the Bureau of Prisons at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.